

18 OCT 1956

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director (Support)

SUBJECT: Management Staff Recommendations Concerning Clerical Training

25X1A9A REFERENCE: [] Memorandum to Deputy Director (Support),
"Report of Survey of Clerical Training Program," dated
2 August 1956

1. With two exceptions, the Office of Training concurs in the findings and recommendations concerning clerical training activities contained in the referenced report. We do not concur in recommendations b and g, paragraph 5, quoted as follows:

"b. The Clerical Refresher Courses be offered from September to June only."

"c. Two Instructor positions and ceiling be deleted from the present staff strength of the Clerical Training Unit, Basic School, OTR."

2. In the view of the Office of Training, recommendation b is undesirable for the following reasons:

a. It proposes a reduction in program services without examination of program need. The proposal is based on an incomplete analysis of instructor utilization, and passes over the key question of Agency needs for clerical refresher training.

b. Clerical training, like other forms of training, is a service, and it is particularly true of a service provided for students in clerical grades that it must be available at the convenience of the using components. The figures on enrollment in Clerical Refresher Training for FY 1956 are attached as Tab A. They indicate that the demand for Clerical Refresher Training is relatively steady throughout the year, averaging 55 students per course. During FY 1956 the three months proposed for deletion saw a total of 154 students in this type of training; in other words, no significant seasonal decline in enrollment takes place during these three months.

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Approved For Release 2002/07/10 : CIA-RDP78-04718A002200240010-2

- c. While the staff study avoids the question of need for refresher training, it should be observed that these needs are real and continuing. They have increased at a rate of about 10% a year during the past three years. In most cases, students are assigned by their components to Clerical Refresher Training to meet specific and immediate needs existing in their office situations. These needs cannot be postponed conveniently except at the expense of office or individual interests. Furthermore, classroom capacity will not permit making up fully a three months' deficit.
- d. Staff capabilities and other factors, notably classroom space, are relatively fixed. It would not be possible to utilize effectively the classroom space allocated to Clerical Refresher training for other purposes during the period when the Clerical Refresher instructors, if reassigned to work with unlearned personnel, would have to teach temporarily elsewhere.
- e. The one basis for this recommendation, in fact, is the judgment expressed in recommendation g, that two positions should be deleted from the Clerical Training faculty. The analysis proposes, in effect, that by "borrowing" two instructors from one part of the Clerical Training faculty for 25% of the year, a saving of two instructors can be made, without other loss in production, for 100% of the year. To test the soundness of this proposition, on which rests even the limited case made out for recommendation b, we must examine recommendation g.

3. The Office of Training cannot concur in the recommendation to reduce by two the T/O strength of the Clerical Training faculty, for the following reasons:

- a. The Clerical Induction program could not be run satisfactorily with two instructors. The proposal centers on the unit of the Clerical Training faculty dealing with unlearned and/or unqualified clerical EOD's. This unit, designated Clerical Induction, now consists of a principal instructor, three other instructors, and a clerical assistant. The entire purpose of this training is to build up skills of clerical recruits to the minimum Agency standards. The workload fluctuates directly with the numbers of new EOD's, and inversely with the level of their qualifications. Under a flexible procedure geared to individual students' needs, students remain in this training stage for periods varying from one to several weeks, and receive instruction in up to seven subjects. The total number of students handled by Clerical Induction during FY 1956 was 1117.

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The proposed reduction to a staff of three, presumably a senior instructor, a journeyman instructor, and a clerical assistant, would be wholly inadequate to handle the load of trainees even during most periods of lower demand, which generally occur between 15 September and 15 June. Tab B shows the numbers entering Clerical Induction each week during the year. Representing incoming students only, these are turnover figures. The teaching load, however, is represented by the total number on hand during any one week. Typical on-hand figures are presented in Tab C. Two instructors and a clerical assistant could handle adequately the numbers encountered, for example, during the weeks of 3 January and 7 May. On many other occasions, for example the week of 3 October, help would be required from other clerical training activities. Little or no advance notice could be given. One, or even two, instructors would have to be pulled out, interrupting other scheduled clerical training activities. It would, in short, be impossible under the proposed staff out to conduct on schedule clerical training services of the kind now being provided.

- b. A staff of two instructors, even aided by two instructors temporarily reassigned from the Clerical Refresher activity, would be unable to cope with the peak loads. There has been, for instance, a midwinter peak, smaller and shorter in duration than the summer load, but not taken into account in the recommendation. As to the summer peak, we have had to stretch every facility with the present staff to meet requirements. Tab D indicates the staff assignments, by individuals and courses, during the month of July, 1956, when 160 students on the average, and a maximum of 201, were in Clerical Induction. As many as fifteen class sessions per day were required. Performance of the training function for MOD's calls for us to meet these peaks, as and when they come. The proposed reduction would leave us with no assurance of being able to do so.
- c. The analysis on which the recommendation is based is incomplete. It assumes a 40:60 ratio between class time and related activities outside class. This ratio is arbitrary, and we cannot support it specifically as it has been applied to Clerical Training. Experience in scheduling clerical instructors and classes tells us that either the ratio is not wholly realistic, or that the staff study has made an insufficient calculation of the 40% class time base. We are inclined to believe that the base has been set up extremely conservatively, reflecting considerably less than the actual time spent by instructors in first-hand classroom contact with the students. "Break" time, and time amounting to several hours a week for each

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instructor before and after classes is spent in what amounts to individualized instruction. Such time is properly a part of the classroom base time, but it has not been accounted for in the analysis. The 40:60 division of time is at best a rule of thumb, and should be interpreted and applied in the light of actual practice.

- d. The analysis of work loads for the Clerical Training faculty as a whole has taken no account of non-routine and special instruction which is given during the periods of lessened demand in the major courses. These are considerable in the aggregate; six such special activities are listed in Tab E. Two other additions are significant. One is a testing program, requiring 5 to 15 staff hours per week, recently assigned to Clerical Induction (Tab F). This was briefly noted in the analysis, but was given insufficient weight as a job requirement. The second is skill testing for on-duty employees, given twice monthly by Clerical Refresher. Time amounting to 10½ instructor hours per month, or approximately 2½ hours per week, is required.
- e. No account has been taken in the analysis of the supervisory responsibilities of three senior instructors reporting to the Chief, Clerical Training. The scattered layout of clerical training activities, in Alcott Hall and Quarters Eye, and intermittently forces delegation of supervisory responsibility by the Chief.
- f. The recommendation ignores the factor of quality. First, we have to do a first-class job of clerical training if it is to be done at all. In contrast with the business college, where the student has made his own financial commitment, and can work well or poorly with no resulting effect on the school, we are giving training in a situation where the Agency is committed to the student, has a sizable investment in him, and must make him learn rapidly what he needs to know. In fact, it is to compensate for the inadequacies in high school and business college training that the Clerical Induction and Clerical Refresher programs exist. Consequently, we have emphasized in the past the broadening of training for our instructors, of whom not all are ideally qualified. This has meant a considerable amount of time devoted to the training of instructors, somewhat beyond the 5% level for a period of time. Second, quality of instruction is the reason for our insistence on time for individual instruction and semi-tutorial training for selected cases. Third, the basic clerical skills constitute a routine field of instruction, in which the individual contacts with students, the constant re-examination of teaching methods, and the exploitation of opportunities for

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non-routine instruction offer the only possible means for keeping the teaching staff on their toes. Reduction of the staff to the point where these non-routine teaching exercises would be precluded could only result in a lower overall level of teaching effectiveness.

4. Conclusion. For these reasons, the Office of Training does not concur either in curtailment of the Clerical Refresher Program, or in reduction of the Clerical Training staff by two persons. This is not to say that no changes are possible. If we were able to put the clerical training operation into one building, so that all three phases of the program were physically close, it would be possible to increase the interchange of instructors and we have laid out plans whereby without reduction of training effectiveness, the program could operate at present levels with a total of ten people: a chief, seven instructors, and two clerks. Alternatively, reduction of clerical training requirements would permit reduction of personnel. However, present space assignments and present loads, with clerical trainees coming through at a rate of over 2700 per year, require the present staff of eight instructors, two clerks and a chief.


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Director of Training

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Attachments:

- TAB A - Clerical Refresher Training Enrollment, FY 1956
- TAB B - Clerical Induction Training Enrollment, FY 1956
- TAB C - Clerical Induction Training, Typical Enrollments, FY 1956
- TAB D - Clerical Induction Training, Instructor Work Load
- TAB E - Special Training Activities, FY 1956
- TAB F - Instructor Hours Required for Testing

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